



**VERMONT
ALLIANCE OF
INDEPENDENT
COUNTRY STORES**

**VERMONT ALLIANCE OF INDEPENDENT COUNTRY STORES
135 NORTH MAIN STREET, SUITE 5
RUTLAND, VERMONT 05701
TEL: (802) 775-5460
FAX: (802) 773-2242
COUNTRYSTORES@VAICS.ORG
HTTP://VAICS.ORG/**

Dear Country and General Store Supplier,

The **Vermont Alliance of Independent Country Stores** is an organization of country and general store owners who have joined together to insure that our stores remain vital throughout this new century, and beyond. Our plan is build a strong network of independent business owners to promote our stores, highlight our valuable contributions to our communities, and underscore our historical place in Vermont.

The Country and General Store is an indispensable feature of the Vermont landscape.

In the ever-growing climate of big box stores and mega-mergers we, the country and general store owners, know the value of community. The important role we play in the day-to-day life in Vermont must not disappear from our future.

The Vermont Alliance of Independent Country Stores has a web site with links to member store sites which you can visit at VAICS.org. It includes helpful information for store owners, tour maps, as well as the membership forum for members to share their knowledge and experiences.

Currently on the website is a travel map listing all member stores, and this will be produced as a printed map in the future. Also, a "Store Card" will be designed listing local information on the front, and on the flip side, local points of interest. We are coordinating with the Regional Marketing Organizations of Vermont Tourism to promote and retain our historical significance.

A distinctive VAICS logo is being designed so that we will be recognized as a store of quality. The logo will also identify our Alliance with the network of other stores throughout the state. Established standards of service will behind the logo, representing stores that are clean, safe, fair, friendly and community-involved businesses—and we are also Farm Heritage Partners in the Vermont Seal of Quality program.

Our newsletters are regular features identifying milestones of country store growth, and showing how our partnership with Vermont businesses makes us all stronger.

We are seeking suppliers who support our efforts by joining with us and identifying the Alliance as an important partnership, and by actively offering pricing discounts to members and specials only available in our stores. The process of promotions has already begun.

We would like invite you to join the Vermont Alliance of Independent Country Stores. Your support and participation are needed to help us build a strong network of independent country and general stores.

Thank you,

Jayne Nold-Laurendeau
Membership Committee
Vermont Alliance of Independent Country Stores